

Pre-Deployment Battlemind For Leaders

(Ten Tough Facts About Combat)

PSB04002/1 (22 May 2008)



Terminal Learning Objective

- In a classroom environment, given Leaders of Warriors, Noncommissioned Officers and/or Officers preparing to deploy in support of combat or other high-risk military operations, describe the relationship between a Warrior's perceptions and a Leader's actions in ensuring a Warrior's well-being. IAW the Mental Health Advisory Team (MHAT) findings and the Battlemind principles and concepts discussed during this block of instruction.

The Development of Battlemind

- What is Battlemind?

A Warrior's inner strength to face adversity, fear and hardship during combat with confidence and resolution. It is the will to persevere and win.

- Objectives of Battlemind:

To prepare Warriors mentally for the rigors of combat and other military deployments

The Development of Battlemind

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- Objectives of Battlemind:

To assist Warriors in their transition back home

The Development of Battlemind

- What is Battlemind?

A Warrior's inner strength to face adversity, fear and hardship during combat with confidence and resolution. It is the will to persevere and win.

- Objectives of Battlemind:

To prepare Warriors with the skills to assist their battle-buddy during deployment as well as to transition back home

The Development of Battlemind

- What is Battlemind?

A Warrior's inner strength to face adversity, fear and hardship during combat with confidence and resolution. It is the will to persevere and win.

- Objectives of Battlemind:

To prepare Warriors to possibly deploy again in support of all types of military operations, including additional combat tours

The Chaos of Combat

- Intense elation, fatigue and fear
- Heat, noise, blast effects
- Tough to discriminate targets
- Difficulty identifying Leaders
- Hard to maintain contact, control of movement
- Disorder from many yelling commands simultaneously; injured screaming
- Concentration on wounded and/or dead
- Elusive enemy; rarely visible, poorly defined

Profile of Hostile Forces



Profile of Hostile Forces

- Faces of hostile forces:
 - Native insurgents
 - Native and foreign terrorists
 - Illegal militias
 - Criminals and disenfranchised
- An enemy that doesn't fight *"fair"*
- Non-uniformed combatants
- An enemy that doesn't follow recognized laws of land warfare

“Worst Day” Scenarios



“Worst Day” Scenarios

- Your battle-buddy is killed or critically wounded
- Key Leader killed
- Missing Warriors
- Catastrophic vehicle kill or accident
- Perimeter breach
- Handling/cleaning-up of human remains

What You May See



What You May See

- Extreme poverty
- Decay, garbage and feces
- People on rooftops; gawkers “just looking”
- Rubbled structures
- Incoming/outgoing fire
- Raging infernos – your vehicle on fire
- Wounded/killed friends and enemies

What You May Hear



What You May Hear

- Explosions
- Gunfire, ricochets and near misses
- Cries of wounded
- Pleas for help or mercy
- Wailing of mourners
- Shouts of rage and taunts
- Multiple commands

What You May Smell



What You May Smell

- Rotting garbage
- Burnt flesh and hair
- Heavy chemical and industrial smoke/fuel
- Open sewage, feces and stale urine
- Decaying animals

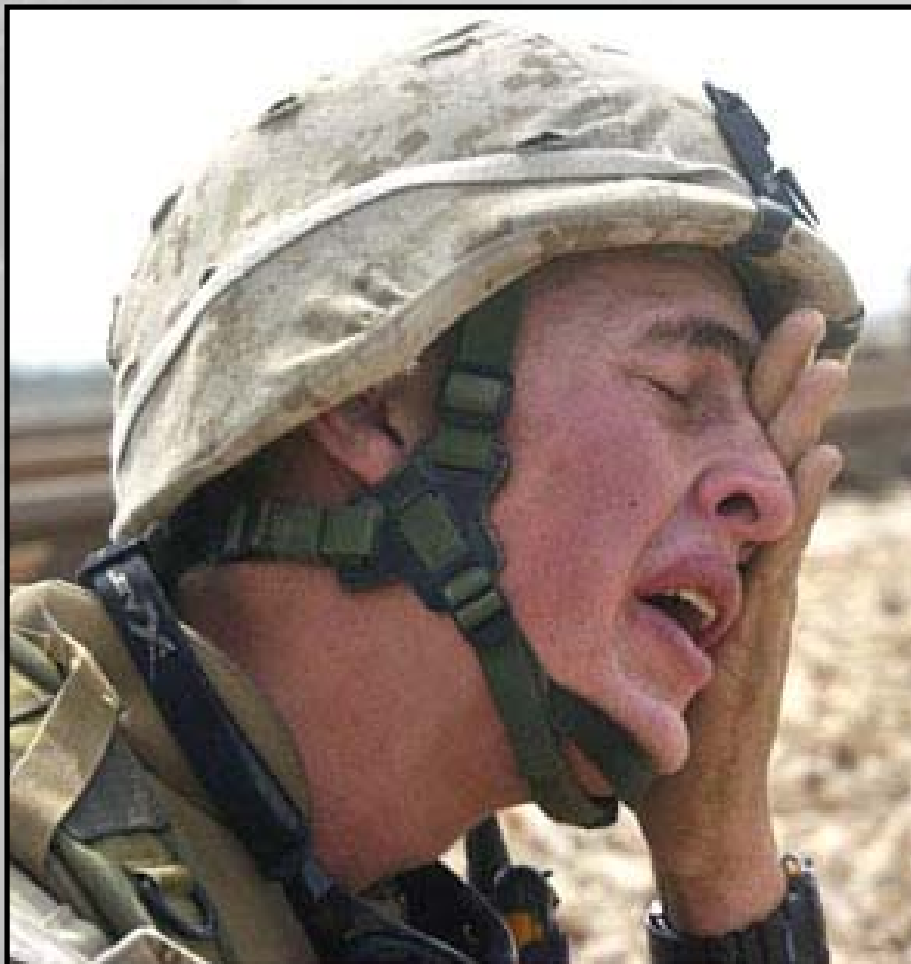
What You May Think



What You May Think

- There'll always be war here; *always has been*
- I'm wasting my life here
- They should be fighting for themselves
- They don't want us here
- There doesn't seem to be a point to this
- The sacrifices I'm making are not worth it
- No progress is being made here
- *I'm tired of this s***!*

What You May Feel



What You May Feel

Emotional:

- Anger, fear, doubt, isolation, worry
- Confusion
- Second guessing; feelings of guilt
- Pride, excitement
- Camaraderie, cohesion

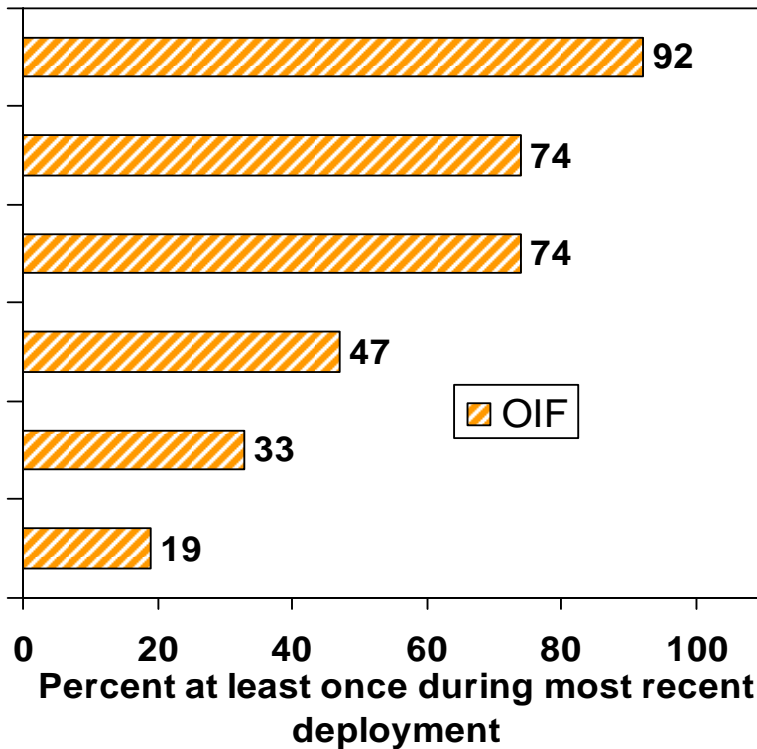
Physical:

- Pain, nausea
- Muscle soreness; periods of profound exhaustion
- *Other physical effects*

The Nature of Combat

- Our Warriors report:

Knew someone seriously injured or killed



Having a member of your own team become a casualty

Seeing dead or seriously injured Americans

Handling or uncovering human remains

Being responsible for the death of an enemy combatant

Saved the life of a Soldier or civilian

OIF

0 20 40 60 80 100
Percent at least once during most recent deployment

The Nature of Operational Deployments



What are deployments like?

The Nature of Operational Deployments



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The Nature of Operational Deployments

- Realities of deployments:
 - Boredom and monotony
 - A lack of privacy
 - Perceptions of a lack of necessary equipment
 - Rules of Engagement / General Order 1
 - Orders from the Chain of Command
 - *You are not home*

Mental Toughness

- Deployments can strengthen your Battlemind:
 - Provide an opportunity to lead in combat
 - Show your courage
 - Appreciate what's really important in life
 - Mature as a person and a Warrior
 - Use your military skills and training
 - Be part of a dynamic team
 - Provide an opportunity to serve your country

Mental Toughness

“Leaders must have strong minds, ready to accept facts as they are.”

Harry S. Truman

33rd President of the United States of America

Will you have to face these combat facts?

How will you react?

What can you do to remain mentally
tough and confident?

What will you do to keep your Warriors
resilient?

Tough Fact #1

Fear in combat is common.

Reality and Actions #1

Findings:

- Over two-thirds of silver star recipients reported an increase in fear as the battle progressed.
- Common symptoms of fear include: violent shaking or trembling, losing control of bowels or bladder, feeling weak, having cold sweats, and vomiting.
- Fear and anxiety are reduced in combat when Warriors engage in actions derived from their training experiences.

Reality and Actions #1

What Leaders Can Do:

- Drill and train Warriors in specific actions to take under combat conditions.
- Provide Warriors sufficient time to recover physically and mentally from combat.
- Admitting and joking about fear will release tension.
- Remember that fear is a normal response and NOT a mental disorder.

Battlemind Concept #1

Even heroes feel fear.

Tough Fact #2

Unit members may be injured or killed.

Reality and Actions #2

Findings:

- Thousands of Warriors have been wounded or killed since OIF/OEF began.
- Warriors get angry when Leaders fail to show they care about their combat experiences, especially ones involving injuries or death.

Reality and Actions #2

What Leaders Can Do:

- Have experienced Leaders talk to new Warriors about how to mentally handle the first casualty and other traumatic events.
- Consider suggesting that your unit members write a letter to their loved ones in case they don't return.
- Ensure that Warriors don't assume unnecessary risks when conducting missions.
- Talk to your unit members personally after traumatic events.

Reality and Actions #2

What Leaders Can Do (cont'd):

- In addition to memorial services, encourage your unit members to find their own way to honor their fallen comrades.
- Request Battlemind Psychological Debriefings led by mental health professionals or Chaplains. Our Warriors report them to be helpful.

Battlemind Concept #2

All Warriors are entitled to go into combat with the best chance of survival that you as their Leader can provide.

Tough Fact #3

*There will be communication and
information breakdown.*

Reality and Actions #3

Findings:

- Warriors report that deployment policies are often inconsistently applied.
- Warriors often report that they don't know the status of their wounded team members.
- Warriors make up rumors if Leaders don't tell them the facts.

Reality and Actions #3

What Leaders Can Do:

- Keep your Warriors informed. Telling your Warriors you don't know is better than not telling them anything at all.
- Make sure that your policies and views on all matters are clearly expressed and made known.
- Let every Warrior in the unit know the status of wounded evacuees.
- Disseminate the news of your successes, as well as those of other units.

Battlemind Concept #3

*Effective communication
is the responsibility of the
Leader.*

Tough Fact #4

*Warriors frequently perceive failures
in Leadership.*

Reality and Actions #4

Findings:

- Good Leadership is linked to high Warrior morale and cohesion and to fewer mental health problems.
- Warriors report that frequently Leaders engage in actions to enhance their own career and personal well-being.
- Warriors also report that Leaders often fail to exhibit clear thinking and reasonable action when under stress.

Reality and Actions #4

What Leaders Can Do:

- Have experienced Leaders tell unit members facts they wish they had known in order to mentally prepare for combat.
- Allow subordinates to seek clarification of orders or policies without being defensive or considering them disloyal.
- Remove or reassign those subordinate Leaders or Warriors who fail to measure up.
- Recognize how stress and lack of sleep affect your decisions.

Battlemind Concept #4

*Courage and valor in
combat are the measures
of Warrior and Leader
performance.*

Tough Fact #5

*Combat impacts every Warrior
mentally and emotionally.*

Reality and Actions #5

Findings:

- Combat operational stress reactions involve many symptoms (physical, mental, behavioral) and occur when a Warrior becomes overwhelmed with the stressors of combat.
- Over 95% of Warriors who receive forward mental health support are returned to duty.

Reality and Actions #5

What Leaders Can Do :

- Ensure that Warriors have access to mental health professionals as close to their unit as possible.
- Ensure AMEDD personnel receive Battlemind Warrior Resiliency (BWR) training so they can assist other Warriors in coping with the stress of combat.
- Treat Warriors with combat operational stress reactions as you would treat any other injured Warrior.

Battlemind Concept #5

*Combat operational stress
reactions are expected.*

Tough Fact #6

The physical and mental health effects of combat, including PTSD and mild TBI, are frequently misunderstood.

Reality and Actions #6

Findings:

- Reactions that are sometimes called PTSD can help Warriors survive in combat. For example, being hyper-alert or startling easily.
- Most Warriors (80-90%) do not develop PTSD but some need help.
- "Mild traumatic brain injury" (*mTBI*) is a medical term for concussion (*being knocked out, getting your bell rung*). Full recovery is expected after concussion but prompt medical evaluation is necessary to assure there is not a more severe brain injury.

Reality and Actions #6

What Leaders Can Do:

- Encourage your Warriors to look out for each other, but discourage them from trying to “diagnose” each other.
- If reactions are interfering with Warriors ability to do their job or get along with others, then ensure they get professional help. Earlier treatment leads to faster recovery.
- If there is a possibility of a concussion, ensure the Warrior is seen as soon as possible by a healthcare provider.

Battlemind Concept #6

*PTSD is complex. Utilize
available medical assets.
Don't “blow-off”
concussions.*

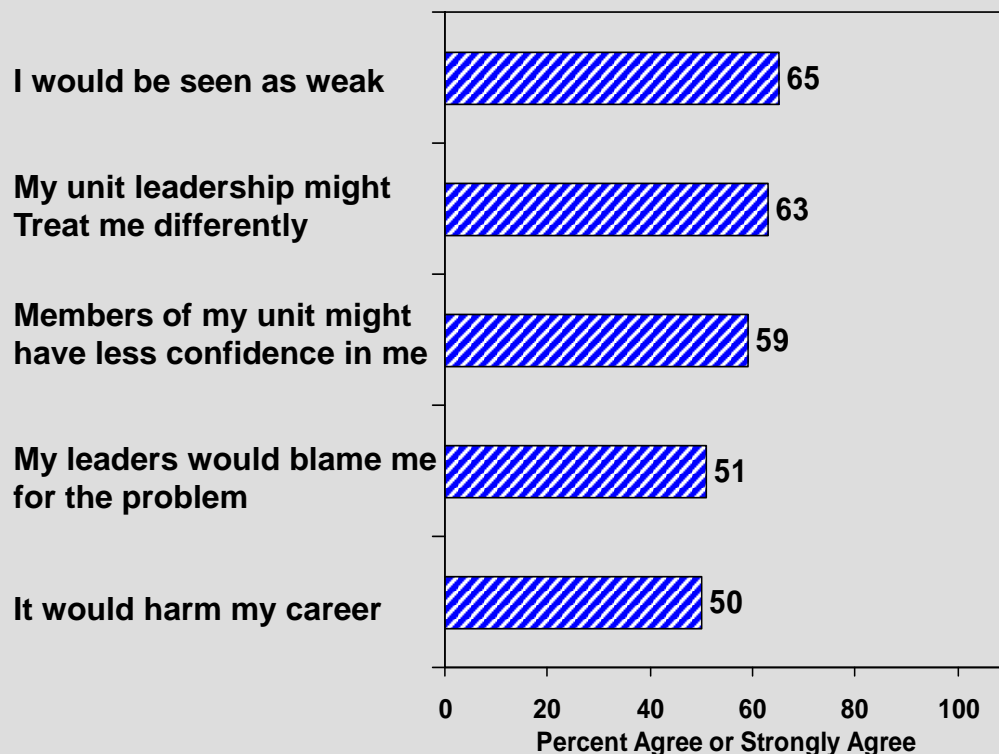
Tough Fact #7

Warriors are reluctant to admit they have a mental health problem.

Reality and Actions #7

Findings:

- Less than half of Warriors with mental health problems get help because of stigma.



Reality and Actions #7

What Leaders Can Do:

- Establish a command climate where Leaders acknowledge that Warriors are under stress and might need help.
- Build a strong relationship with the mental health (behavioral health) team supporting your Warriors.

Battlemind Concept #7

*It takes courage to ask for
mental health care and good
Leadership to ensure our
Warriors receive the help
they need*

Tough Fact #8

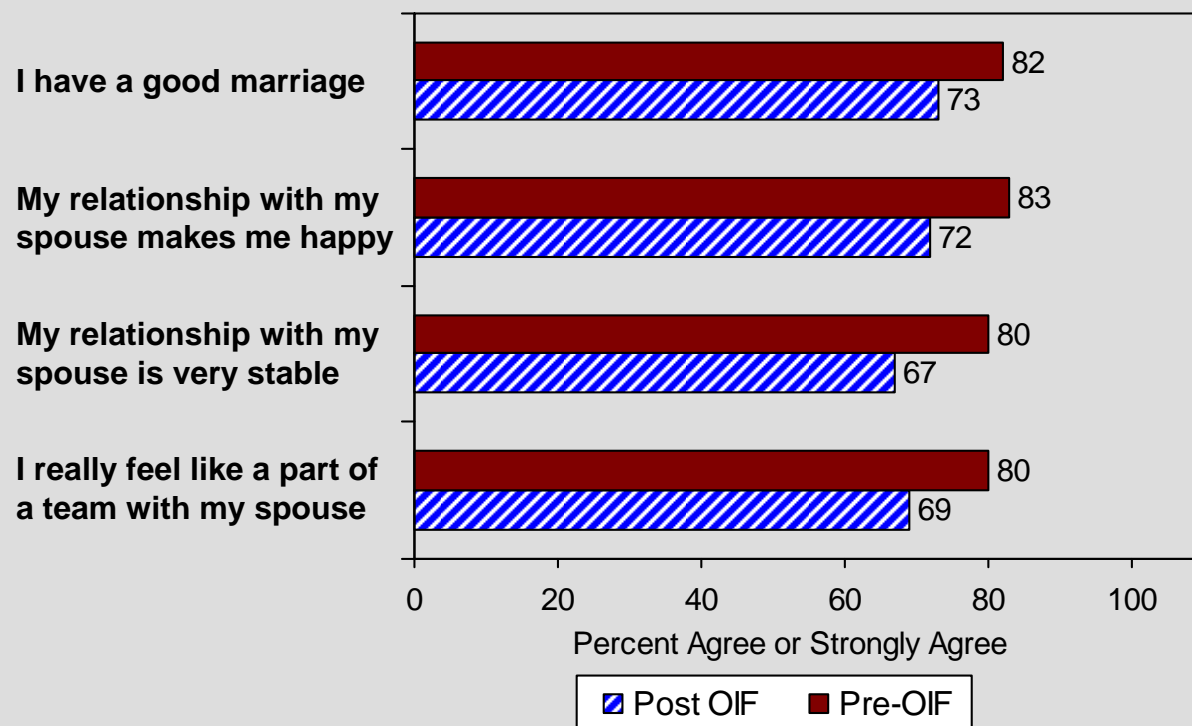
*Deployments are hard
on Families.*

Reality and Actions #8

Findings:

- 20% of all Warriors deployed to OIF reported marital concerns or problems.
- Marital satisfaction declined after deploying to OIF.
- Warriors generally report dissatisfaction with the Family Readiness Group (FRG) and rear detachment.

Reality and Actions #8



Reality and Actions #8

What Leaders Can Do:

- Ensure timely actions are taken to address any reported FRG or rear detachment problems.
- Don't allow Family problems to go unanswered. Assign staff to expedite solutions to Family problems.
- Encourage unit members to inform Family about what to expect regarding communication.
- Formally recognize all special Family occasions such as births and graduations.
- Encourage spouses to attend Pre-Deployment Spouse Battlemind Training.

Battlemind Concept #8

*“When a Soldier is at war, his
[or her] mind should be at
peace.”*

Lord Moran, 1945

Tough Fact #9

*The combat environment is
harsh and demanding.*

Reality and Actions #9

Findings:

- A Warriors' mental performance progressively deteriorates with less than 8 hours of sleep per day. 5 to 6 hours of sleep per 24 hours is not sufficient.
- The combat environment (e.g., physical strain, heat, noise, lack of privacy) takes a toll on all Warriors.
- Warriors are extremely sensitive to perceived inequalities in MWR resource distribution.

Reality and Actions #9

What Leaders Can Do:

- Ensure unit members replenish lost sleep. Make sleep a priority like other essential logistical re-supply items.
- Insist on a fair distribution of MWR resources. Prevent double standards among Officers, NCOs and Junior Enlisted Warriors.
- Be aware of the physical condition and sleep patterns of your Warriors and insist that conditioning and sleep are maintained throughout the deployment.

Battlemind Concept #9

*Recognize the limits of your
Warriors' fortitude.*

Tough Fact #10

Combat poses moral and
ethical challenges.

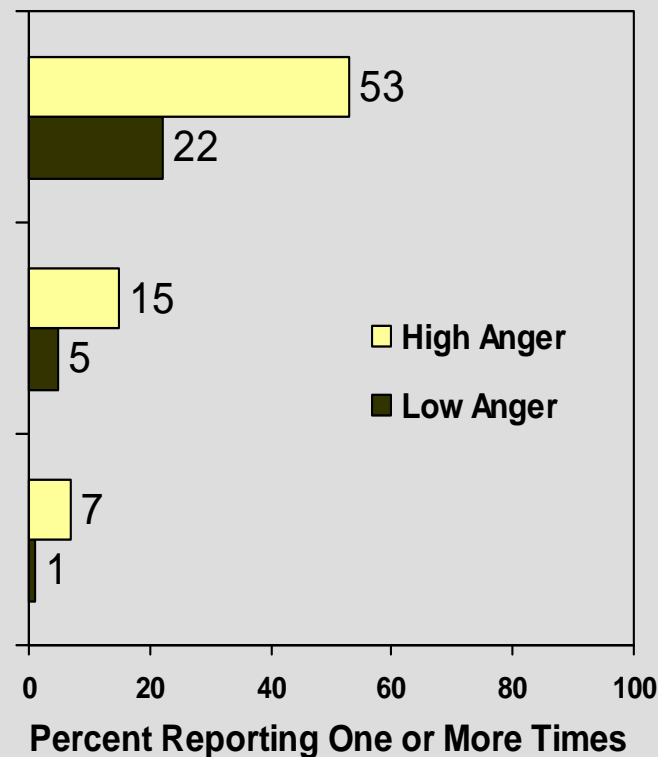
Reality and Actions #10

Findings:

- Combat exposes the reality of death.
- Combat tests the character of Leaders and Warriors alike.
- Warriors who are unable to control their anger are more likely to commit ethical violations.

Reality and Actions #10

Insulted/cursed at non-combatants
in their presence



Damaged and/or destroyed Iraqi
property when it was not necessary

Physically hit / kicked non-combatant
when it was not necessary

Data from MHAT OEF 2007

Reality and Actions #10

What Leaders Can Do:

- Reward and recognize Warriors on a regular basis for their personal sacrifices.
- Do not allow your Warriors to insult, curse or harass non-combatants.
- If your unit takes a casualty, talk to your Warriors and acknowledge their anger but ensure that this does not lead to reprisals.
- Discuss the moral implications of their behavior in combat; remind them to "Return Home with Honor".

Battlemind Concept #10

*Every returning Warrior
needs to come home with
a story that he or she
can be proud of.*

The American Warrior

“The capacity of Soldiers for absorbing punishment and enduring privations is almost inexhaustible so long as they believe they are getting a square deal, that their commanders are looking out for them, and that their own accomplishments are understood and appreciated.”

GEN Dwight Eisenhower, 1944

A faded, grayscale background image of a soldier in full combat gear, including a helmet and camouflage uniform, holding a rifle. The soldier is positioned on the left side of the frame, facing right.

What are your questions?